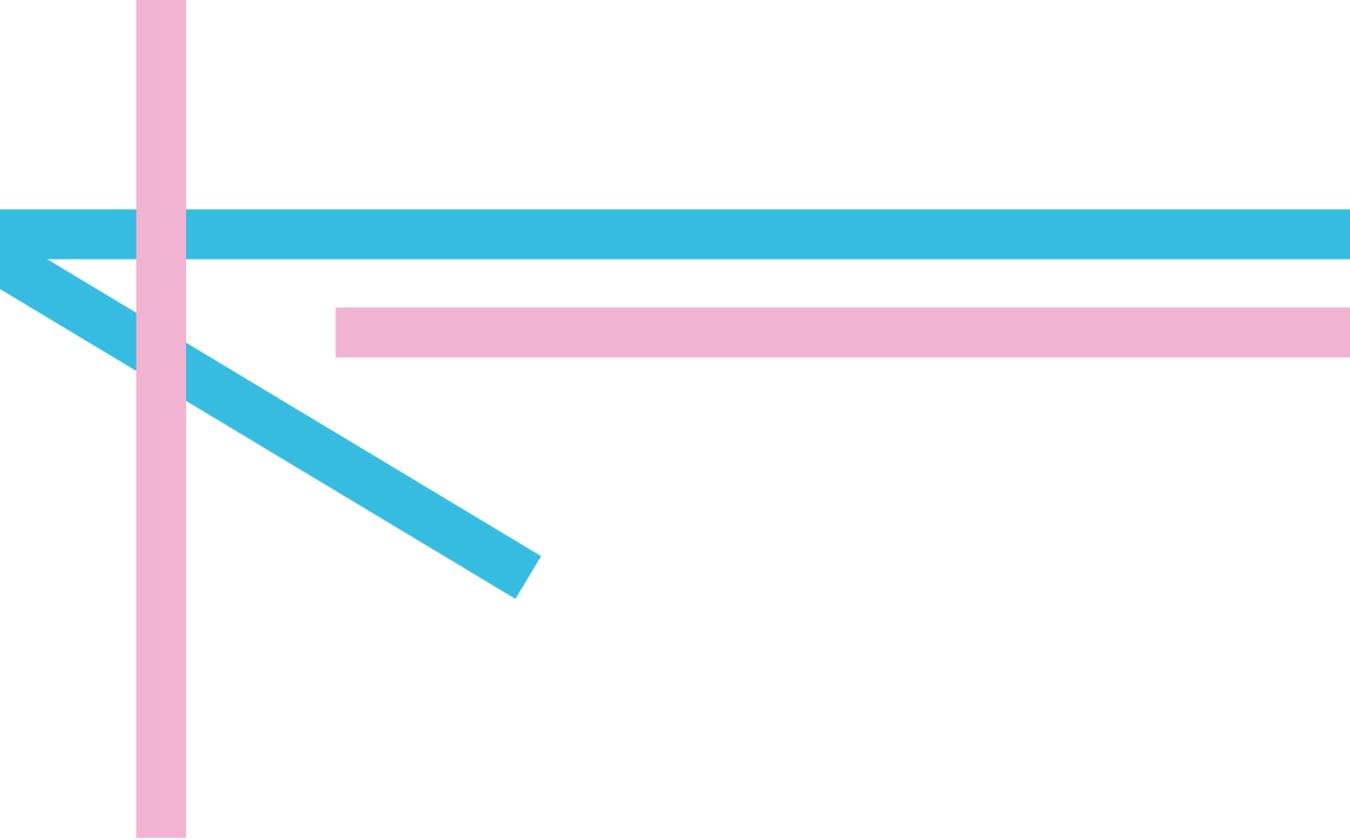




Curtin University

# GENDER TRANSITION AT CURTIN GUIDE



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This publication is available in alternative formats on request.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

Curtin embraces diversity and is committed to fostering a community in which its members are treated with respect, equality and dignity; regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital or relationship status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, family responsibility or status, gender, gender identity, intersex status, sexual orientation or gender history. Curtin leads this commitment through our Value and Signature Behaviour of Respect.

Curtin welcomes diversity because we recognize that, when fully utilized, diversity results in a safe, innovative and prosperous environment. When individuals are able to bring their whole selves to Curtin, they thrive, and Curtin thrives. This includes being ranked as a top Australian University for LGBTIQ\* inclusion.

### GUIDELINE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this guide is two-fold. Firstly, to provide information and guidance for individuals undergoing gender transition at Curtin. Secondly, to provide information for managers and/or student coordinators on how to achieve a welcoming and supportive environment for individuals undergoing transition. The guide is designed to be flexible enough to customise a transition plan specific to circumstance, but also specific enough to provide a consistent framework for managing the transition process.

### CURTIN POLICIES

All members of the Curtin community are expected to uphold the University's Values and Signature Behaviours and conduct themselves consistent with the Code of Conduct, Student Charter, Equity and Diversity Policy and Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment Procedures. Discrimination, harassment or any other inappropriate behavior directed against an individual, or group, because of their gender identity or gender expression is prohibited. In addition to this, the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) specifies that it is unlawful to discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status, this includes people who are transgender and gender diverse.

### TRANSITION PLANNING

Gender transitioning or gender-diverse individuals' and their managers and/or student coordinators are urged to develop a confidential transitioning project plan, in consultation with one another, detailing what needs to be done in preparation for gender transition at Curtin. It is crucial that the transitioning individual direct the timing of informing others, how others will be told, and who should be told. The plan is not meant to dictate a pace or timeline, but rather provide a framework for managing the transition process. To support the process, it is highly recommended that the gender transitioning individual establish a support and advocacy network. Persons to consider include, but are not limited to: manager, student coordinator, a member of Human Resources or Student Support Services, a trusted member of the LGBTI Ally group, Curtin Counselling Services and/or a Curtin Guild representative. There is no 'best' method of transitioning so it is important that all parties involved use an adaptive process, adjusting and revising the plan for the situation and circumstances at hand.

### APPEARANCE AND RESTROOMS

A transgender person is permitted to dress consistently with their gender identity and is required to comply with the same standard of dress and appearance that applies to all other members of the Curtin community. The decision as to if, when and how to begin transition socially remains the individuals' choice. Transgender and gender diverse individuals are permitted to use facilities that correspond to their gender identity and expression.

### GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT

Support is critical for individuals' who inform Curtin of their intention to transition or who are transitioning. The actions of management will play a key role in the successful outcome of the overall transition at Curtin. A lack of knowledge about transgender and gender diversity issues has the potential to create anxiety and confusion. If you are not familiar with the LGBTIQ\* community, seek education through the Curtin Ally Program, Curtin Counselling Service and/or Curtin Guild. You may also wish to contact Human Resources and/or Student Support Services. In addition to this you may also seek information and support from external community groups such as Living Proud WA.

### SUMMARY

This guide advocates the use of a well-developed transition plan based on mutual respect. The guide is a living document and may be revised as legal or procedural advancements occur.



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 GENDER TRANSITION

Not all individuals' gender identity or gender expression conforms to society's expectations or stereotypes about the gender designated to them at birth. The term 'transgender' is an umbrella term commonly used to describe a broad spectrum of people whose gender identity or expression does not match their birth sex. The term 'transsexual' refers to a person who, with or without medical treatment, has changed or is in the process of changing their physical sex to match their internal sense of gender identity. Transition is a unique journey for each individual and may involve social and/or medical transition including but not limited to medical treatment, such as surgery or hormone replacement therapy, wearing preferred-gender clothing and body-shaping garments, adjusting mannerisms and speech patterns and asking others to call them by their preferred names and pronouns. Gender diverse is a term that refers to an individuals' behavior or gender expression that does not match the gender norms or societal stereotypes. Not all individuals who consider themselves to be transgender, or gender diverse, will undergo a gender transition. However, given that many transitioning individuals must "come out" within the Curtin community in order to live consistently with their gender full-time Curtin necessarily become involved in transition. During this time, it is the role of a manager and/or student coordinator to ensure a supportive and respectful environment. This is vitally important for all Curtin community members but it is particularly critical for gender transitioning and gender-diverse individuals.

### 1.2 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At Curtin, everyone within our community has the right to have their gender identity respected and acknowledged, without fear of negative consequences. As such there are rights and responsibilities which must be upheld by all Curtin community members with regard to gender diverse and transgender students and staff. These include:

#### 1.2a NON-DISCRIMINATION

The University does not condone intentional or unintentional discrimination or harassment between members of the Curtin community, including between staff, between staff and students, or between students. Failure to comply with the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), the University's Values and Signature Behaviours, Code of Conduct, Student Charter, Equity and Diversity Policy and/or Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Procedures could result in corrective action.

#### 1.2b RIGHT TO PRIVACY

Transgender and gender diverse individuals have the right to be who they are without unnecessary disclosure of medical or personal information. First and foremost, an individuals' right to privacy is to be considered confidential and respected throughout the gender transition process. Those who are privy to a student or staff members' transgender status, including any health information, must take steps to safeguard such information.

- Disclosure is prohibited except when express permission is granted from the gender transitioning individual
- Curtin may require proof of identity for verification purposes, however evidence of gender affirmation surgery or treatment is never a requirement
- Gender transitioning individuals will be informed by Curtin if personal information needs to be shared with others on a business needs-to-know basis

#### 1.2c LEAVE AND TIME OFF

The transitioning process may require an individual to take time off from work and/or study. The Enterprise Bargaining Agreement as well as Curtin leave policies apply to transitioning individuals to the same extent as they would apply to individuals who have other necessary leave requirements. Students who are undergoing gender transition are entitled to apply to defer their initial enrolment or take a leave of absence from their studies. The manager and/or student coordinator should assist the individual in understanding their benefits through referral to the appropriate resources for leave and time off benefits. It cannot be over stated that these conversations are always treated confidentially.

#### 1.2d APPEARANCE AND RESTROOMS

Transgender and gender diverse individuals are permitted to dress consistently with their gender identity and are required to comply with the same standard of dress and appearance that applies to all other members of the Curtin community. Transgender and gender diverse individuals are permitted use facilities that correspond to their gender identity

## 2.0 TRANSITIONING INDIVIDUALS

### 2.1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are many factors to consider when transitioning at Curtin. To ensure your transition is as smooth as possible, you are encouraged to confidentially contact your manager and/or student coordinator in advance of the planned transition date so that the necessary support can be provided. You should be prepared to speak about your intentions, needs and concerns, as appropriate. In some cases, your manager and/or student coordinator may not be educated about transgender issues and some time may be required to educate others about what your needs might be. It is highly recommended that, in consultation with your manager and/or student coordinator, a confidential transition plan be developed. The plan should lay out a road map and agreed actions to be undertaken to ensure successful transition at Curtin. The plan should, at a minimum, include:

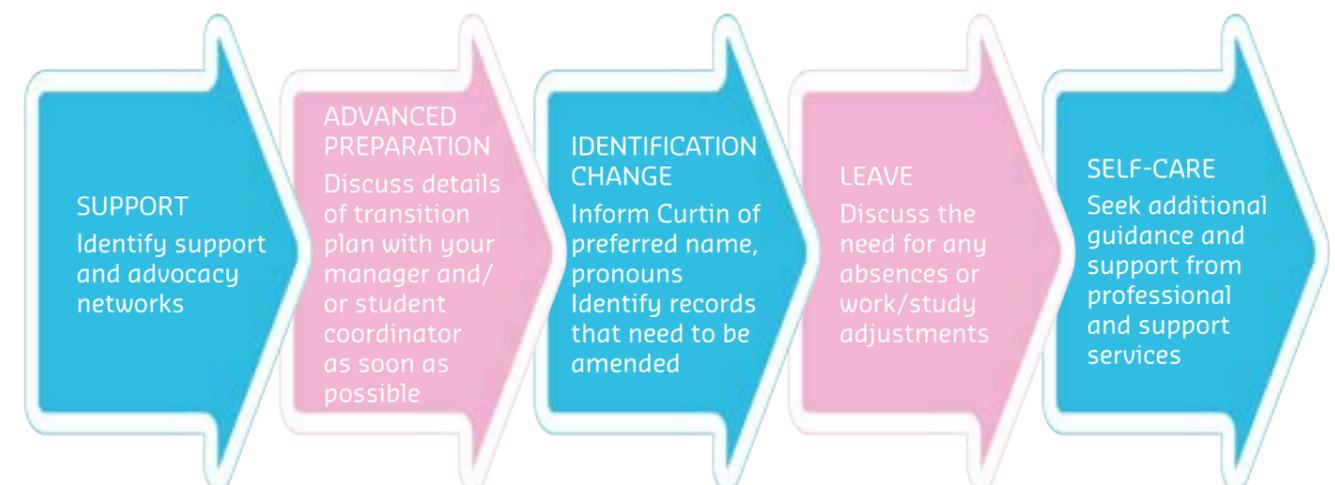
- The date on which you would like to assume your new gender identity at Curtin
- Any leave required
- The identification of Curtin records that will need to be changed and the expected timeframe for this change to be actioned
- The manner in which others will be made aware of your transition at Curtin
- Who will be informed
- When the announcement will be made

If you are uncomfortable contacting your manager and/or student coordinator the Director, Corporate Values and Equity or Director Support Services and/or Director, Student Services can help provide the right connections. In addition to this, you may nominate a support person, of your choosing, to attend meetings with your manager and/or student coordinator. It is important to remember that you direct the timing of informing others, how others will be told, and who should be told. The plan is not meant to dictate a pace or timeline, but rather provide a framework for managing the transition process.

Remember, if you feel you have been discriminated against, or harassed, you have the right to report a complaint in accordance with Curtin Complaints Procedures; noting that you must take all reasonable steps to register their complaint with the University within 12 months of its occurrence. For more detail please refer directly to the Complaints Procedures, which can be found under 'find a policy' on the Curtin University Compliance, Legislation and Policy webpage.

### 2.2 TRANSITION PLAN

It is crucial that you, as the transitioning individual, direct the timing of informing others, how others will be told, and who should be told at Curtin. The transition plan is not meant to dictate a pace or timeline, but rather provide a framework for managing the transition process



## 2.2a SUPPORT

Together with your manager and/or student coordination, you will need to consider who will be confidentially informed about your transition and who may be part of your support and advocacy network. It is highly recommended that you establish a support and advocacy network. Persons to consider include: manager, student coordinator, a member of Human Resources or Student Support Services, a trusted member of the LGBTI Ally group, Curtin Counselling Services and Guild representative/s.

## 2.2b ADVANCED PREPERATION

Ensuring successful transition at Curtin requires thoughtful planning. It is therefore recommended that together with your manager and/or student coordinator a confidential transition plan is developed, if possible in advance of your transition date. The plan should address the timing of informing others, how others will be told, and who should be told. The plan is not meant to dictate a pace or timeline, but rather provide a framework for managing the transition process. There is no 'best' method of transitioning so it is important that all parties involved use an adaptive process regarding the transition plan, adjusting and revising the plan for the situation and circumstances at hand. A basic list of what actions might need to be completed include:

- Creation of support and advocacy network
- Date of your transition
- What changes will be made to records and when they will be made
- Planning for back up or leave of absence if required
- Development of communication strategy, detailing how others will be informed and plans to promptly address any inappropriate response to your transition

## 2.2c IDENTIFICATION

Curtin is required to take reasonable steps to ensure personal information on University records is correct. If you need to amend your details, the amendment should be verified using evidence to demonstrate a link between your former and current identity. However, evidence of gender affirmation surgery or treatment is never a requirement. To learn more about how records can be changed visit the [Curtin Current Students](#) webpage, or the [Curtin Employee Kiosk](#). Items which may require amendment at Curtin are detailed below:

### Preferred Name and Pronouns

A request to amend your preferred name can be made to Human Resources or Student Services at any time. Verification of identity is not required, nor is any rationale for the amendment. This amendment will not result in any changes to your given name in the existing University record. It is recommended you advise your manager and/or student coordinator of your preferred name and pronouns in writing, in keeping with your transition plan Given Name and Family Name A request to amend your given and/or family name can be made to Human Resources or Student Services at any time. To be able to amend an existing record, the University will need to link the change of existing record to the new record. To support this process, you will be asked to provide proof of identity. The system change will take effect once Human Resources and/or Student Services have sighted the following evidence:

- Official Change of Name Certificate, or
- Official Marriage Certificate

### Title

A request to amend your title can be made to Human Resources or Student Services at any time. If preferred, title fields may be left blank. A title conferred by way of degree, award or honour is amended by Human Resources or Student Service upon request and in accordance with University policy.

### Gender

A request to amend your gender can be made to Human Resources or Student Services at any time. Curtin systems allow for identification as M (male), F (female) or X (indeterminate/unspecified/intersex). Amendments to gender information on your University record do not require any evidence.

## 2.2d LEAVE

The Enterprise Bargaining Agreement as well as Curtin leave policies apply to you to the same extent as they would apply to individuals who have other necessary leave requirements. Students who are undergoing gender transition are entitled to apply to defer their initial enrolment or take a leave of absence from their studies. Your manager and/or student support officer should assist you in understanding your leave benefits through referral to the appropriate resources for leave and time off.

## 2.2e SELF-CARE

Curtin offers a range of support services for LGBTI students and staff. Some of these services are highlighted below, and the full range is available on the CurtinLife website.

### Curtin, Counselling Services

Counselling Services provide a confidential service to students and staff, including assistance with issues relating to sexual identity, interpersonal relationships and related issues. These services are accessible by all students and staff identifying as LGBTI, and includes a bisexuality discussion group.

### Curtin, Ethics, Equity & Social Justice

Ethics, Equity & Social Justice provides information on the rights and responsibilities of individuals according to equal opportunity legislation and related University policies and procedures.

### Curtin, Health Services

Health Services provides medical and nursing services for students and staff. These services are supportive of LGBTI students and staff.

### Curtin, Student Guild Queer Department and CLAG Collective

The Curtin Student Guild's Queer Department and associated CLAG Collective are a great service for any gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning (GLBTIQ) student studying at Curtin. The CLAG Collective is a social avenue for students providing support, social activities and information to members. See the Queer Department on the Guild website for more information.

In addition to Curtin listed services you may also wish to engage external community groups. These include but are not limited to:

### Freedom Centre

The Freedom Centre is a safe space for young (under 26 years) gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning people to meet, chat, hang out and access information. Located in Northbridge, Perth.

### Living Proud WA

Living Proud Inc is a charitable organisation dedicated to serving the LGBTI community in WA. They offer a range of services and run events supporting this community.

### M Clinic

Free HIV/STI testing Clinic for men who have sex with men, including trans men. The clinic is run and staffed by gay/bi men and we aim to provide a non-judgemental service.

### Minus 18

Minus18 is Australia's largest youth-led network for gay, bi, lesbian and trans teens.

### Pride Western Australia

Pride Western Australia advocates for gay and lesbian issues in Western Australia.

### Qlife

QLife is Australia's first nationally-oriented counselling and referral service for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex (LGBTI). QLife provides nation-wide, early intervention, peer supported telephone and web based services to people of all ages across the full breadth of people's bodies, genders, relationships, sexualities, and lived experiences.

### Trans Folk of WA

Provide a support network for trans people and their loved ones in Western Australia.

### WA Aids Council

The WA AIDS Council leads WA in the provision of a wide range of services in the prevention of HIV, and the support of those living with HIV/AIDS. This includes information about support and education programs for same sex attracted, as well as a counselling service for LGBTI people.



## 3.0 MANAGER / STUDENT COORDINATOR

### 3.1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Fostering diversity is a major contributing factor to the success of a safe, innovative and prosperous environment at Curtin. Everyone within our community has the right to bring their whole selves to study and/or work, this includes having their gender identity respected and acknowledged; without fear of negative consequences. If you as a manager or student coordinator are unfamiliar with transgender or gender nonconformity, it is essential that you seek support, guidance and training from Curtin professional and support services including Human Resources, Curtin Counselling Services, LGBTI Ally Training Coordinator/s, LGBTI Ally Advisory member/s, Curtin Guild Officer/s. You are also highly encouraged to seek external guidance and support from organisations including but not limited to Living Proud and Pride Western Australia.

As a manager or student coordinator your support is critical for individuals' who inform Curtin of their intention to transition or who are in the process of transitioning. The most effective way to establish a welcoming, supportive and safe atmosphere is to lead by example. To assist you in this, the following guidance is offered.

### 3.2 CONFIDENTIALITY

Transgender and gender diverse individuals have the right to be who they are without unnecessary disclosure of medical or personal information. First and foremost, an individual's right to privacy is to be considered confidential and respected throughout the gender transition process. If you are privy to a student or staff members' transgender status, including any health information, you must take steps to safeguard such information. Remembering that:

- Disclosure is prohibited except when express permission is granted from the gender transitioning individual
- Curtin may require proof of identity for verification purposes, however evidence of gender affirmation surgery or treatment is never a requirement
- Gender transitioning individuals will be informed by Curtin if personal information needs to be shared with others on a business needs-to-know basis

### 3.3 INITIAL CONVERSATION

Transitioning individuals' are encouraged to confidentially contact their manager and/or student coordinator so that the necessary support and guidance can be provided for successful transition at Curtin. Below are some key points for your consideration:

- LGBTIQ community members are protected under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) and Curtin policies, including but not limited to the Equity and Diversity and Discrimination and Harassment Prevention policies
- Curtin value diversity and recognize that being transgender has nothing to do with an individual's ability to undertake their studies or perform their job
- The individual will direct the transition plan
- Managers and/or student coordinators support the transition plan
- Confidentially will be upheld at all times, this includes not prematurely disclosing the individual's transition
- Respectfully ask the individual if they expect to change their name. If so, ask what name and pronouns the individual will use and when others should begin using them
- Inform the individual of Curtin support services available to them
- Discuss any specific study and/or work related questions the individual may have

## 3.4 TRANSITION PLANNING

### 3.4a SUPPORT

Ensuring successful transition at Curtin requires thoughtful planning on the part of the transitioning individual and their support and advocacy network. Members of this network may include, but are not limited to: manager, student coordinator, a member of Human Resources or Student Support Services, a trusted member of the LGBTI Ally group, Curtin Counselling Services and Guild representative/s. As a manager and/or student support coordinator it is expected you provide support, guidance to the transitioning individual. There are many ways in which a manager and/or student coordinators words and actions can foster a supportive environment.

### 3.4b ADVANCED PREPERATION

It is recommended that together with the transitioning individual a confidential transition plan is developed, if possible in advance of the transition date. The plan is to be directed by the individual and should address the timing of informing others, how others will be told, and who should be told.

Remember, the plan is not meant to dictate a pace or timeline, but rather provide a framework for managing the transition process. Some things to consider:

- When does the individual anticipate being ready to assume their new identity
- Will the individual need time off? If so, how much time and when
- How would the individual like to inform others
- What problems if any, are anticipated
- What kind of awareness training will be provided and to whom
- What changes will be made to records and when they will be made

### 3.4c IDENTIFICATION

If you are not sure if the transitioning individual has a preferred name and/or pronouns, it is appropriate to respectfully ask the individual how they would like to be addressed. In general, it is considered disrespectful to continue to use the wrong name and/or pronouns once a preference has been established. It is expected that initially mistakes will be made however, continued intentional misuse may be considered as discrimination and harassment and may therefore constitute violation of [Curtin Policy](#) and [Federal law](#).

In order to keep identity consistent, a gender transitioning individual may request their University records are amended (e.g. staff and/or student ID badge, email account, training records) to reflect their new title, name and gender. A request to amend records can be made to Human Resources or Student Services at any time.

### 3.4d LEAVE

The [Enterprise Bargaining Agreement](#) as well as Curtin leave policies apply to a gender transitioning individual to the same extent as they would apply to individuals who have other necessary leave requirements. Students who are undergoing gender transition are entitled to apply to defer their initial enrolment or take a [leave of absence](#) from their studies. You should assist an individual in understanding their leave benefits through referral to the appropriate resources for leave and time off, specifically Human Resources and/or Student Services.

## 3.5 CONCLUSION

This guide has been developed to provide assistance to individuals who may wish to or are in the process of gender transition, as well as their managers and/or student support coordinators. The guide advocates the use of a well-developed transition plan based on mutual respect. It is outside the scope of these guidelines to provide detailed advice relating to specific situations or circumstance. It is hoped these guidelines will be useful for members of the Curtin community and aid in fostering a community in which its members are treated with respect, equality and dignity.

## 4.0 TERMINOLOGY

### Cisgender

The term cisgender refers to individuals who experience their gender in the traditional manner of someone born in that sex and in ways that society deems as traditional.

### Gender

The term gender refers to the way in which a person identifies or expresses their behavioral, cultural, psychological, or social traits as either masculine or feminine. Gender does not necessarily accord with an individual's anatomical sex.

### Gender Identity

The term gender identity refers to a person's psychologically held internal and individual sense of gender.

### Gender Expression

The term gender expression refers to external characteristics and behaviors that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine.

### Gender Diverse

The term gender diverse refers to expression of behavior that does not match the expected normal binary of a "typical" male or female.

### Intersex

The term intersex refers to an individual who is born with sex chromosomes, external genitalia, or internal reproductive system

### LGBTIQ\*

The term "LGBTIQ with an asterisk" is meant to represent the wide diversity and fluidity of sexual orientation, sex, and/or gender identity. It includes, but is not limited to, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex and queer people.

### Sex

The term sex refers to an individual's biological characteristics.

### Sexual Orientation

The term sexual orientation is the preferred term used when referring to an individual's physical or emotional attraction to the same or opposite gender.

### Transgender

The term transgender is an umbrella term commonly used to describe a broad spectrum of people whose gender identity or expression does not match their birth sex.

### Transitioning

The term transitioning refers to the process through which an individual begins to live as the gender with which they identify, rather than that assigned at birth. Transition may involve social and/or medical transition including but not limited to medical treatment, such as surgery or hormone replacement therapy, wearing preferred-gender clothing and body-shaping garments, adjusting mannerisms and speech patterns and asking others to call them by their preferred names and pronouns.

### Transsexual

The term transsexual refers to a person who, with or without medical treatment, has changed or is in the process of changing their physical sex to match their internal sense of gender identity



## 5.0 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### SAMPLE EMAILS: Initiating Conversation

Dear (Manager/Student Coordinator)

I would like to talk with you regarding a confidential matter that will require your support and understanding, as well as some changes (at work/to my study environment). You may not be aware that I am transgender and intending over the coming period to (outline aspects of decision).

I would like to initiate a confidential discussion with you so as to arrive at a plan of action to have my gender identity recognised at Curtin. The 'Gender Transition at Curtin Guidelines' have been a useful guide for me and I am hoping we can use this recourse to support the process of transition. I understand this could be an unfamiliar concept for you and I am open to sharing with you what this journey means to me. I will send through a meeting request shortly. Could you please let me know a suitable time to meet? I would prefer this meeting to be held (outline preference).

Dear (Students/Staff)

Fostering diversity is a major contributing factor to the, success of a safe, innovative and prosperous environment within (AREA). Everyone within (AREA) has the right to bring their whole selves to (study and/or work) this includes having their gender identity respected and acknowledged; without fear of negative consequences. Not everyone's gender identity or gender expression conforms to society's expectations or stereotypes about the gender designated to them at birth. Transition from one gender to another is a unique and highly personal journey, so it is with great honor that I am able to announce (NAME) is now known as (PREFERRED NAME) with the pronouns (preferred pronouns).

I understand that this could be an unfamiliar concept for many of you, so please do not hesitate to contact me, or Counselling Services (08 9266 7850) if you have any questions or would like further information. I am also including some links that may further your understanding of gender-transition, and of the highly supportive stance that Curtin University holds towards diversity (resource links, including Curtin policy and guides).

### EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Australian Human Rights Commission [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

Pride in Diversity [www.prideindiversity.com.au](http://www.prideindiversity.com.au)

The Gender Centre [www.gendercentre.org.au](http://www.gendercentre.org.au)

Human Rights Campaign [www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)

Diversity Council Australia [www.dca.org.au](http://www.dca.org.au)

Gender Education and Advocacy [www.gender.org](http://www.gender.org)

National LGBTI Health Alliance [lgbti.health.org.au](http://lgbti.health.org.au)

